

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 03751 231504Z

65

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 231451Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5287

S E C R E T PRETORIA 3751

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: MNUC, SF

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM: POSSIBLE WEAPONS
ASPECT

1. DURING COURSE CASUAL DINNER CONVERSATION WITH POLITICAL COUNSELOR MUNN ON EVENING AUGUST 20, JOHANN ZYLSTRA, RETIRED MILLIONAIRE BUILDING CONTRACTOR IN HIS SEVENTIES, PAST PRESIDENT OF BUILDING INDUSTRY COUNCIL AND CONSULTANT TO SAG, WAS ENUMERATING MAJOR PROJECTS HE HAD CARRIED OUT DURING HIS CAREER. AMONG THESE HE MENTIONED THAT HE HAD BEEN A PRIME CONTRACTOR FOR THE PELINDABA NUCLEAR CENTER.

2. ZYLSTRA SAID THAT DURING THE COURSE OF WORK AT PELINDABA, THE GOVERNMENT HAD ASKED HIM TO UNDERTAKE ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT JOBS HE HAD EVER HAD. HE HAD BEEN OBLIGED TO "GO STRAIGHT DOWN FORTY-FIVE METERS THROUGH SOLID ROCK, THEN ONE-HUNDRED-EIGHTY METERS HORIZONTALLY, AND ANOTHER FORTY-FIVE METERS BACK UP TO THE SURFACE, ALL THROUGH SOLID ROCK". ZYLSTRA ADDED THAT AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF EXCAVATION HAD BEEN INVOLVED, ADDING "IT WAS THE TOUGHEST JOB I HAVE EVER DONE, BUT IT WAS ESSENTIAL FOR OUR WEAPONS PROGRAM." ZYLSTRA CONTINUED WITHOUT PAUSE, MENTIONING SEVERAL OTHER LARGE PROJECTS WHICH HAD GIVEN HIM A SENSE OF REAL ACCOMPLISHMENT.

3. CIRCUMSTANCES DID NOT PERMIT FURTHER EXPLORATION OF THE TOPIC, WHICH IN ANY EVENT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE TRIGGERED IMMEDIATE WARINESS. PERHAPS ERDA EXPERTS CAN ASSESS

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SIGNIFICANCE OF EXCAVATION DESCRIBED BY ZYLSTRA AGAINST

OTHER KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PELINDABA TO DETERMINE WHETHER THIS
WAS REQUIRED BY PRESENT REACTOR INSTALLATION OR IS PART OF
BROADER PROGRAM.
BOWDLER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, NUCLEAR WEAPONS, CONTRACTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchant0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
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To: STATE
Type: TE
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